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Psychology Newsletter

Departmental Newsletters

Fall 2019

Unraveled Fall 2019

Southern Adventist University

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Congratulations, December 2019 Graduates!

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Meet Our New Faculty Member

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A New Addition to Teaching Licensure



Briana Diaz in her new classroom after graduating as a licensed teacher

If you were a student of Southern Adventist University's School of Education and Psychology before 2019, then you may not know that a major change has occurred in the teacher education program. As usual, education majors must pass the PRAXIS, which is a certification exam written and administered by the Educational Testing Service. However, as of January 2019, teacher candidates must also complete a teaching performance assessment called edTPA in order to become a licensed teacher. Krystal Bishop, director of teacher education at Southern, described the assessment: "EdTPA is a performance assessment grounded in best practices that focus on student learning. It includes lesson plans, administration and analysis of assessments, student work samples, analysis of student learning, video clips of the candidate's teaching, and commentaries related to planning, instruction, and assessments." All student teachers must complete edTPA during the first of two placements. This assessment is mandated by the state of Tennessee. Professor Bishop explained, "It is scored externally from our program by higher education faculty and practicing classroom teachers who have been trained in using the assessment and rubrics." Currently, 11 states require edTPA, and compared to other states, Tennessee has the highest required passing score at 42 out of 75. To learn more about why the edTPA has been added and about how it affects the School of Education and Psychology, turn to page 2.

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK

It's been a warm summer and fall here in Collegedale, Tennessee, but not as warm as the welcome has been for me as I've transitioned into my role as dean of the School of Education and Psychology (SEP). The faculty, staff, and students have made me feel right at home here. I'd like to give a heartfelt thanks to Bonnie Eder, who served as interim dean last year. Her wisdom, experience, and knowledge allowed her to advance important initiatives within our school and to continue the excellent work being accomplished in each of our programs. Stepping into this role has been much easier due to her work as interim dean.



Tammy Overstreet, PhD

Surrounded by SEP faculty and staff members who have been here for many years, I have been blessed to benefit from their knowledge and expertise as I learn the ropes. Soon, however, I will no longer be the newest member of the SEP family. Katie McGrath will be joining us in January 2020 to serve as our Certification Officer and Teaching Materials Center (TMC) director. Professor McGrath is no stranger to Southern. As a librarian for McKee Library for over a decade, she is well-known across campus for her energy and dedication. Professor Cathy Olson will be retiring from this position in December 2019. Her tireless efforts have maintained a standard of excellence in the TMC that make it a wonderful resource for our students and community. We would like to thank her for her dedication and for her role in helping both our Education and our Counseling students attain licensure. She will be greatly missed.

May God bless each of you in the coming weeks and months. We would love for all of you to join us in prayer as we work together to fulfill our mission to prepare effective Christian professionals who demonstrate a commitment to the pursuit of truth, wholeness, and a life of service in a diverse society.

A New Addition to Teaching Licensure

(continued from page 1)

Historically, students in Tennessee schools have scored low on standardized assessments compared to national scores of other students. However, according to the Tennessee Department of Education, looking at the scores of fourth-graders and eighth-graders on The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2013, Tennessee became the fastest-improving state in the nation for academic growth. In an effort to maintain this momentum, new teachers must be able to skillfully plan, instruct, and assess prior to their first day of teaching. Student teachers must demonstrate that they are well-prepared to teach with intention and to meet the needs of all students, including those with learning challenges. For these reasons, Tennessee has adopted the edTPA as part of the teacher licensing process.

According to Professor Bishop, many benefits come from this added requirement. For student teachers, the assessment raises their level of professionalism, builds respect for the teaching profession, and boosts their confidence to succeed. For the School of Education and Psychology, the assessment elevates the level of instruction our professors must provide for our candidates, gives a common professional language to professors and candidates, and demonstrates aspects of our education program's conceptual framework (informed facilitators and reflective decision-makers) to a national audience.

For teacher candidates, meeting an additional requirement to become licensed might feel daunting and stressful; however, the following quotes from a few of the May 2019 graduates may provide some reassurance. After completing the edTPA, Kyle Harris (History Education) stated, "EdTPA is very unpopular among students, but it is a great asset to complete that will teach you how to create lessons that differentiate for students, learning in a much greater way than simply going through student teaching and taking licensure tests." Kara Wait (Elementary/English Education) also found the assessment to be a great asset. She explained: "I actually feel very positive about edTPA. It offers many benefits for teaching candidates, such as learning to implement best practices and defend EVERY educational decision." In giving advice, Briana Diaz (Liberal Arts Education) remarked, "EdTPA doesn't have to be the monster that everyone is super afraid of! It takes a lot of work and commitment, but if you are prepared, you will be okay! READ YOUR HANDBOOKS!! They are your best friends when it comes to doing well."

For more information, visit edtpa.com.

New Student Spotlight: Katie Milliken

The School of Education and Psychology is home to a diverse group of students. They come from all over the world with different experiences and perspectives. Each person has a unique story to tell about finding his or her respective program. One of the newest students to join the group is MS counseling student Katie Milliken. Katie is from Harrison, Tennessee, and has lived in the area her whole life. She went to Chattanooga State for two years and graduated in May 2017 with an Associate of Science degree. In May 2019, she completed a Bachelor of Science in psychology at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). She is currently working toward a master's degree in School Counseling, but she is planning to switch to the dual program (M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling) by the end of the semester. The following questions and answers describe Katie's journey from hearing about our program to her future plans after graduating.

1. How did you hear about Southern Adventist University?

Last summer (2018) I volunteered as a camp counselor at Camp ZooAbility, which is designed for people with disabilities. Our supervisors told us that a group of master's students studying outdoor education at Southern were coming to observe our camp for their field experience. Each of the visiting students seemed really passionate about being there, and we had so much fun getting to interact with everyone there that day. The professor of the course (Tron Wilder) asked me about my future plans, and I told him that I was looking into different master's programs that were focused on school counseling. He began to tell me about Southern and the counseling program it had to offer. A few weeks after this conversation, I scheduled a meeting with Mikhaile Spence (the graduate program manager) to get even more information about applying to the program. I was so nervous prior to this meeting because I didn't know what to expect or what they would expect of me. Mikhaile was so fast to calm my anxiety, which made the atmosphere so much more comfortable. I think that this is what ultimately sold me on applying to the school counseling program at Southern.

2. What helped you decide to attend this institution?

The atmosphere here was so welcoming, and everyone I met was very nice (opposed to my undergraduate institutions). This is what really sets Southern apart from other universities. The faculty and administration are exceptionally helpful, and you feel that they want the best for you and your future.

3. What has been your experience so far?

When I got home after my first day of graduate school, I was pretty overwhelmed the new workload and just the overall anxiety of adjusting to graduate-level courses. My parents and sister surrounded me with encouragement and comfort that is still with me today. As a new student in the school counseling program, one of the things that I admire about the faculty is their openness of their love for the Lord. The fact that the professors implement worship and prayer in each class is very calming and encouraging to my faith.

4. What do you want to do after graduation?

To become a school counselor as well as use my LPC license in a clinical setting as a part-time job (and full time in the summers when I am on summer break).

5. How have you seen God work in your personal and academic/professional life?

Personally, God has been such a huge part of my personal and academic life. I grew up attending a traditional Baptist church since I was a small child, and because of this, I have always had the idea that God is in control of my life and that prayer is the way in which I can speak to him. It wasn't until middle school when I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart. More recently (the past three weeks), I have chosen to rededicate my life to the Lord after seeing all of the things that he has done in my life. I feel like I am closer to God right now than ever before. Of course, I will always have to work to be a servant of the Lord, but now I am more motivated than ever. One thing that I think has impacted this experience in my life is the environment that I am consistently in at Southern. The devotion, worship, and prayer that the professors provide in each class have encouraged and helped me in my walk of faith immensely. I am very thankful that I was accepted into this program and have so much to look forward to as well as contribute to during my time here at Southern.



If you would like to receive future *Unraveled* newsletters electronically, please email uas@southern.edu and request to be added to the list.

CONGRATULATIONS, DECEMBER 2019 GRADUATES!



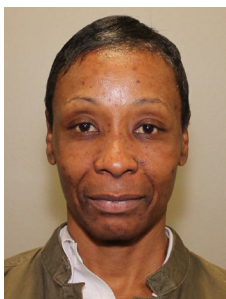
Dominique Anson
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education (Non-Licensure)
Hometown: Reddick,
 Florida
Future Plans: to take
 a year off to work and then
 go back to school for my
 master's degree



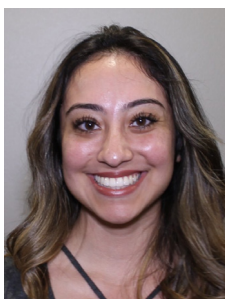
Jedidiah Cooper
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education (Non-Licensure)
Hometown:
 Onondaga, Michigan
Future Plans: to
 go treasure hunting in
 Wyoming



Audrey Covrig
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education
Hometown: Portland,
 Tennessee
Future Plans: to
 become an elementary
 teacher



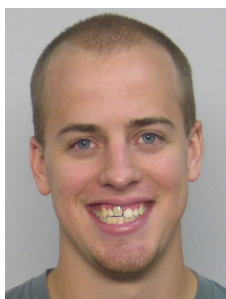
Yolunda Garth
Major: MS Clinical
 Mental Health Counseling
Hometown: Canton,
 Mississippi
Future Plans: to
 serve veterans as a licensed
 professional counselor



Sarah Guadarrama
Major: Psychology-
 Clinical
Hometown: San
 Diego, California
Future Plans: to
 go to graduate school to
 pursue therapy with kids
 who have special needs



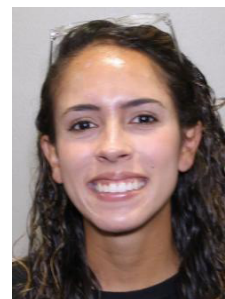
Alexis Jones
Major: English
 Education
Hometown: Slidell,
 Louisiana
Future Plans: to
 become a teacher, traveller,
 and grad student



Kirby Kirschmann
Major: MSED
 Instructional Leadership
Hometown: St. Louis,
 Missouri
Future Plans: to
 continue teaching and
 perhaps one day step into
 administration



Jake Krein
Major: Biology
 Education
Hometown: Gentry,
 Arkansas
Future Plans: to
 become a high school
 biology teacher and a
 farmer



Astrid Lizardo
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education (Non-Licensure)
Hometown:
 Charlotte, North Carolina
Future Plans: to
 go to graduate school and
 possibly go into the mission
 field



Tye Lomax
Major: Psychology-
 Clinical
Hometown: Kewanee,
 Illinois
Future Plans: to
 apply to the MSW program
 here at Southern



Amy Meadows
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education
Hometown: Inman,
 South Carolina
Future Plans:
 To dive headfirst into
 my teaching career ---
 wherever God calls me!



Raissa Mucyo
Major: Psychology-
 Clinical
Hometown: Kigali,
 Rwanda
Future Plans: to
 take a year off, then attend
 graduate school to pursue
 clinical mental health
 counseling or public health



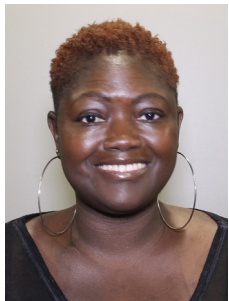
Randy Nomura
Major: MSED
 Instructional Leadership
Hometown: Houston,
 Texas
Future Plans: to
 continue as the principal
 of Greenville Adventist
 Academy, where I have
 served for nine years



Prianka Pathak
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education (Non-Licensure)
Hometown: Houston,
 Texas
Future Plans: to
 become a teacher and
 pursue what God has called
 me to do



Kabrina Perkins
Major: Liberal Arts
 Education
Hometown:
 Martinsburg, West Virginia
Future Plans: to
 teach ESOL, pursuing a life
 of mission, and following
 God's lead



Carisa Powell

Major: MS Clinical
Mental Health Counseling

Hometown:

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Future Plans: to
work on obtaining licensure
and eventually start
practicing independently



Addriene Rhodes

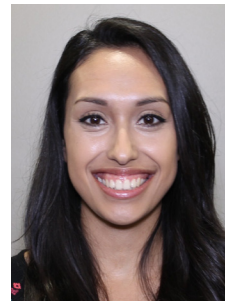
Major: MEd

Instructional Leadership

Hometown:

Douglasville, Pennsylvania

Future Plans: to
continue teaching at Pine
Forge Academy and pursue
a doctorate degree



Cristiana Rico

Major: Psychology-
Family Systems

Hometown: Medford,
Oregon

Future Plans: to take
a gap year then pursue a
master's in marriage and
family therapy

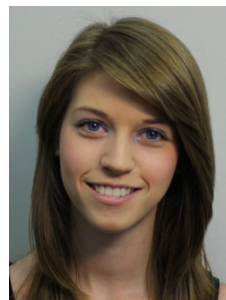


Danielle Shica

Major: Psychology-
Clinical

Hometown: Austin,
Texas

Future Plans: to
take a gap semester and
gain experience in the field
of psychology and to start
my master's by next fall



Cosette Teschke

Major: Psychology

Hometown: Chicago,
Illinois

Future Plans:
to become a military
psychologist for the US
Marine Corps



**Giovanna
Vanucchi**

Major: Liberal Arts
Education

Hometown:

Richmond, Virginia

Future Plans: to
become a teacher



**Gabrielle
Williams**

Major: Psychology-
Family Systems

Hometown: Pleasant
Hill, California

Future Plans: to
get married, complete
my master's, and become
a marriage and family
therapist

New Faculty Member and Dean: Tammy Overstreet

You cannot find it on any map, but K'ville, Georgia, is the city where our newest faculty member and dean, Tammy Overstreet, PhD, was born. Though Overstreet is new to her role as dean of the School of Education and Psychology (SEP), she is not new to Southern's campus. She attended Southern for all four years of her undergraduate studies. She started off studying biology but switched her major to elementary education in her junior year. It was during this time that she met her future husband in the university's cafeteria. She then continued her education, receiving a Master's in Literacy Education from Walden University and her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from Andrews University. She continued her time at Andrews as a professor, and for over 20 years, she has worked with students of all ages. In 2015, Professor Overstreet returned to Southern as the director of the Southern Online Campus.

When asked what brought her back to SEP, Overstreet explained that she felt led by God to accept the invitation. Southern has always been her "happy place," as she loves the beautiful look of the campus and the warmth of the people. Specifically, in regard to the School of Education and Psychology, she is thankful for the opportunity to interact with and advocate for the students and faculty. When she is not here, she enjoys reading, hiking, kayaking, and playing games with her family, which includes her husband of 29 years, two daughters,

and a son-in-law. She is excited to report that her family just got bigger with the newest member of the family, her granddaughter Kinley.

Professor Overstreet's life has been filled with wonderful people and experiences, and she has accomplished a great deal. Nevertheless, one goal remains through it all: she strives everyday to live out whatever God is calling her to do so that she may add to His kingdom. Those who know our new dean describe her as the godly woman she strives to be on a daily basis. One former coworker from Southern Online Campus stated that Professor Overstreet is empathetic and caring, productive and balanced, and a great role model. Her School of Education and Psychology colleagues describe her as energetic, intelligent, thorough, and a very nice person. When asked about the change in leadership, current faculty stated that Professor Overstreet "has a heart for people and is a woman of prayer," "has a personal walk with God that is shown in everything she does," and "allows God to guide her as she guides us." SEP is blessed to have a leader with these Christlike qualities as our newest faculty member and dean.

Professor Overstreet's family and dogs



Alumni Spotlight: L. Michelle Codington

L Michelle Codington is a perfect example of someone who has become an outstanding professional in her field. She describes the work she does as “helping families bridge the gap from surviving to thriving.” She began her journey at Southern Adventist University, where she completed a bachelor’s degree in psychology, and then graduated from Loma Linda University with a Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy. When asked how the psychology department prepared her for her future, Michelle said, “My instructor and mentor, Professor Ruth Williams, was extremely influential in my development as a professional. She challenged me to push myself past my comfort zone and grow through discomfort. That has proven far more important than any one theory or modality.” Such growth led her to co-found her own agency, Where Kids Thrive (aka the Thrive Program), of which she is the executive director.

Thrive serves children and families across South Jersey. The agency is known for its specialty in addressing complex trauma (attachment disruption) through creative and expressive art therapies. “We use somatosensory interventions such as movement, music, dance, drama, art, and play to regulate the nervous system first before attempting to address specific behaviors,” Michelle explained. “The brain develops from the bottom up; therefore, therapeutic intervention must follow the same order of natural brain development. We don’t make kids ‘behave.’ We teach them how to regulate their own bodies in order to access their choosing mind to make wise decisions for themselves.” Kids who have experienced maltreatment often symbolically depict that in their play.

Though she has achieved professional success, Michelle says she would have never imagined that this is where her journey in life would take her. She explained: “When I first began my career, I swore the one area in which I would never work would be with abused/neglected children. At that time (more than 20 years ago), I didn’t think I could handle it. And yet, now that is precisely what I do... I train other clinicians how to best serve children whose bodies and brains have been impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and educate others on how they can help children heal.” Michelle has presented at many regional and national conferences on child mental health, and she was personally invited by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families to join a task force on how best to meet the mental health needs of young children statewide. Michelle’s work helps to nurture kids into confident, thriving individuals, and for her, it is a profound privilege to be such a significant influence in a child’s life.

For more information about the Thrive Program and Michelle’s work, visit wherekidsthrive.com



An example of a child’s feelings being illustrated



Picture taken at the Association for Play Therapy conference: Michelle Codington (second row, fourth on the left), her Thrive team, and Steve Gross (founder of Life is Good Playmakers, first row)



**School of
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